

## STAFF REPORT

To: City Council Finance Committee

Date: April 21, 2009

From: Lauren Bradley, Assistant to the City Manager

Via: Gary W. Jackson, City Manager

Subject: American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) Update

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update to the City Council Finance Committee on the city's American Reinvestment and Recovery Act program and to seek committee approval to move forward with applications for specific funding opportunities.

### **Administrative Updates**

In an effort to provide timely information about the city's ARRA program, staff is coordinating two important communications efforts over the next several weeks. First, the city will launch its Economic Recovery eNews next week. The e-newsletter will provide information to citizens, vendors and other community contacts who have signed up to receive ARRA updates. Staff is also planning two public meetings to share information about the overall ARRA program, specific funding opportunities, and vendor registration. The meetings are tentatively scheduled for May 14 (AB Tech Victoria Campus) and May 21 (AB Tech Enka Campus). Additional details about the meetings will be forthcoming.

### **Program Updates**

#### ***Public Safety***

##### **U.S. Department of Justice Edward Byrne Competitive Grant Program, Justice Assistance Grants (JAG)**

The JAG Program allows states and local governments to support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime and improve the criminal justice system. Through ARRA, the City of Asheville is entitled to \$265,000 in JAG grant funding. This amount is determined through a formula based on population and violent crime statistics, in combination with a minimum allocation to ensure that each state and territory receives an appropriate share of funding. Staff is developing a proposal for application of these entitlement funds and will seek Finance Committee feedback in the next 30 days.

Byrne Competitive Grants are similar to JAG grants and are focused on ensuring job growth and job retention. However, instead of providing grants based on a formula, BJA administers these funds based on a competitive application process. These grants help state and local communities improve the capacity of local justice systems. The ARRA solicitation for competitive Byrne Grant applications includes funding in eight categories. Staff has reviewed each category to determine what funding opportunities exist for the City of Asheville. All applications are due April 27, 2009. Staff is seeking Finance Committee approval to move forward with completing applications in the following areas:

##### **Category I: Comprehensive Community-Based Data-Driven Approaches to Preventing and Reducing Violent Crime**

Comprehensive, community-based data-driven approaches are required to reduce violent crime. Staff recommends three application be submitted in this area.

- **Project Safe Neighborhoods GREAT Families**

Staff recommends submitting an application for \$50,000 to expand the existing Gang Resistance Education & Training (G.R.E.A.T) program to include a G.R.E.A.T Families

component. G.R.E.A.T. Families is a research-based, family-strengthening program consisting of two components: a six-session family curriculum and a family/community resource guide for G.R.E.A.T. facilitators. The G.R.E.A.T. Families curriculum uses group interaction, activities, and skills practice to engage parents and children ages 10 to 14 in order to foster positive family functioning. Funding would support offering these classes in the city's nine community centers as well as for police and staff overtime and supplies to support the training.

- **Shiloh Area Weed & Seed Model Replication**

The Department of Justice has encouraged applications for initiatives that include replication of promising models such as the Weed and Seed program. Staff recommends the City of Asheville submit an application for \$337,274 to fund two years of a Weed & Seed model replication in the Shiloh area.

In keeping with the Weed and Seed replication model, the “weeding” efforts of the site will focus on limiting the proliferation of gun and drug trafficking, gang activity, and associated violence. A critical portion of the site's law enforcement strategy will include tactical street enforcement aimed at drug and gun abatement in the designated target area. The “seeding” operation will focus on delivering a strategic job training program in the area as well as community-based after-school programs for youth to improve school attendance, performance and graduation rates. These activities will include a variety of services to youth including academic tutoring, computer technology and cultural enrichment programs. In addition to funding school/community center-based programs, the model will extend the service contracting being implemented in the West Riverside Weed and Seed Area, where contracts are awarded to community-approved service providers who support programmatic goals in the target area. Contracted resource providers must be committed to sustaining programs after this funding opportunity has expired. The application for funding will include the salary and benefits of a site coordinator, police personnel overtime, funding for contracted services and necessary supplies, equipment, and training.

- **Downtown Safety & Crime Prevention Initiative**

City Council approved at its April 14, 2009 meeting the submission of a COPS grant application for 12 full-time, sworn police officer positions for a period of three years. If awarded, the additional personnel will allow the Asheville Police Department to create a Downtown Patrol Unit as part of a downtown safety and crime prevention initiative. Staff recommends submitting a grant application through the competitive JAG process for \$118,000 to fund police vehicles and equipment to support the downtown unit. The application will request funding for the purchase of two police segways, two electric motorcycles, one Global Electric Motorcar (GEM), and two fully equipped patrol vehicles. Obtaining this equipment will allow the City of Asheville to effectively implement the Downtown Patrol Unit and safety and crime prevention initiative, thereby reducing violent crime and increasing community policing activities in the downtown area.

## **Category VII: Problem-Solving Courts**

### **Asheville Community Problem-Solving Court**

Staff is seeking Finance Committee approval to submit an application for \$125,000 to fund the first year of a local nuisance court to address crimes that deteriorate the quality of life in business and residential neighborhoods. These issues can include violence, drug dealing, noise, vandalism, prostitution, and speeding cars, among others. Creating a community problem-solving court is a part of City Council's strategic plan, and city leaders have been working to develop the necessary partnerships with judges, magistrates and the district attorney's office to launch a nuisance court

in Asheville. The funding application would include the administrative costs to operate the court twice per month along with funding to support a project coordinator, staff training, community engagement and outreach, compliance monitoring, and individualized justice programs to link offenders with community-based services like job training, drug treatment, mental health counseling and safety planning.

#### **U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice Local Youth Mentoring Initiative**

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is seeking applications to support local organizations in the development, implementation, or expansion of local mentoring programs leading to measurable, positive outcomes for at-risk youth. The grant opportunity is dedicated to enhancing the capacity of local mentoring programs to develop and implement mentoring strategies to reduce juvenile delinquency and prevent violence. Staff is seeking Finance Committee approval to submit an application for \$482,250 to expand the capacity of the City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA) for a period of three years. If awarded, the funding would cover the city's investment in the existing program and would expand its capacity to 25 students while also adding a full-time program coordinator who would focus on year-round mentoring for CAYLA participants.

### ***Energy***

#### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Clean Diesel Program**

EPA established the National Clean Diesel Campaign (NCDC) to promote diesel emission reduction strategies. NCDC includes regulatory programs to address new diesel engines as well as innovative programs to address the millions of diesel engines already in use. Staff is seeking Finance Committee approval to submit an application to the EPA Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant program for a total of \$500,000. The requested funding would fund strategies to reduce the City of Asheville's diesel emissions in three different types of projects: conversion of five existing diesel trucks to run on compressed natural gas; the incremental cost to purchase one new compressed natural gas vehicle; and the incremental cost of using a 5 percent biodiesel blend in all city diesel fuel. In addition, staff has approached Buncombe County for a partnership in this application so that both organizations can combine project priorities in order to meet the minimum application request of \$500,000.

### **Policy Decisions and Next Steps**

Staff is seeking City Council Finance Committee authorization to submit the following applications for ARRA funding:

- (1) U.S. Department of Justice Edward Byrne Competitive Grant Program, Justice Assistance Grants (JAG)
  - Project Safe Neighborhoods GREAT Families (\$50,000)
  - Shiloh Area Weed & Seed Model Replication (\$337,274)
  - Downtown Safety & Crime Prevention Initiative (\$118,000)
  - Asheville Community Problem-Solving Court (\$125,000)
- (2) U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Local Youth Mentoring Initiative
  - City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (\$482,250)
- (3) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Clean Diesel Program
  - City of Asheville Diesel Reduction Project (\$500,000)